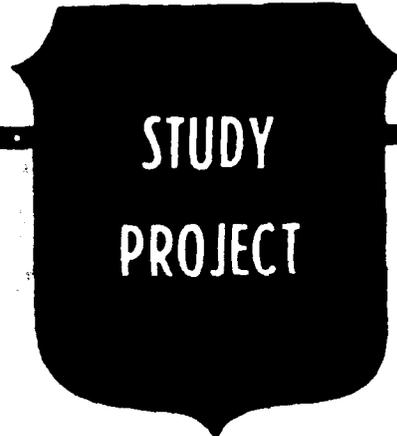


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NEW PERSPECTIVES ON CONTINGENCY CORPS FORCE STRUCTURE

BY

Lieutenant Colonel Donald E. Vinson
United States Army



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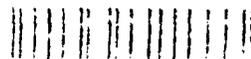
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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS			
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.			
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE						
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION U.S. Army War College		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable) AWCA	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION			
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Carlisle Barracks Carlisle, PA 17013			7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER			
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS			
			PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) New Perspectives on Contingency Corps Force Structure						
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) VINSON, Donald E., LTC, USA						
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Study Project		13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 92/04/15	15. PAGE COUNT 26	
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION						
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)			
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP				
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) This paper explores strategic concepts that will contribute to a more capable Contingency Corps. It examines the relationship between contemporary doctrine and force structure at the tactical level. Inconsistencies in the balance of firepower, maneuver, and combat service support at the brigade level indicate incoherence. The concept of totally self-sufficient, balanced brigades promotes independent operations and increases the probability of tactical success. Included in the study is a discussion on the potential for a total joint Continental United States (CONUS) based contingency force. Finally, the study describes an acquisition strategy that offers the Army a way to buy enough weapons to adequately outfit its forces.						
20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED			
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL Dr. J. W. Williams			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) 717-245-4427		22c. OFFICE SYMBOL USAMHI	

UNCLASSIFIED

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM

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NEW PERSPECTIVES ON CONTINGENCY CORPS FORCE STRUCTURE

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

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UNCLASSIFIED

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Donald E. Vinson, LTC, USA

TITLE: New Perspectives on Contingency Corps Force Structure

FORMAT: Individual Study Project

DATE: 15 April 1992 PAGES: 24 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

This paper explores strategic concepts that will contribute to a more capable Contingency Corps. It examines the relationship between contemporary doctrine and force structure at the tactical level. Inconsistencies in the balance of firepower, maneuver, and combat service support at the brigade level indicate incoherence. The concept of totally self-sufficient, balanced brigades promotes independent operations and increases the probability of tactical success. Included in the study is a discussion on the potential for a total joint Continental United States (CONUS) based contingency force. Finally, the study describes an acquisition strategy that offers the Army a way to buy enough weapons to adequately outfit its forces.



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INTRODUCTION

The United States can be proud of its contingency capability over the last decade. Recent successes in the Caribbean Basin, Central America, and the Persian Gulf justify considerable pride and satisfaction. Defense dollars have produced technologies that enable the military element of power to deal with any adversary. Our doctrine, equipment, troopers, and national will have produced positive results. As the Army now forges into the 1990's, the world is rapidly changing politically and economically. The rate of change denies analysts adequate time to fully digest the total impacts on our country.

How America manages this world transformation will directly affect its capabilities and the will to use them for many years to come. A clash between the superpowers has been averted and the enormous prosperity of the free world has overwhelmed the communist war machine. The world seems a safer place. And this has not been lost on our Congress. In accord with the emergent global situation, our lawmakers are reallocating budget resources to previously neglected domestic needs. Further, both the President and the Budget Director acknowledge in the 1992 budget submission that the economy is in a recessional phase. Presidential guidance directs fixing a good portion of this problem of shifting priorities and a sluggish economy through increases in domestic spending policies and related programs along with major reductions in defense spending.¹

Allocating resources against an amorphous threat has given

way to more pressing social ills that require precious fiscal assets. Particularly, how should the U.S. contingency forces be structured to help offset the imminent force reductions worldwide? How can America avoid another Task Force Smith or such a letdown as we experienced after the Vietnam war?

This paper will explore strategic concepts that will contribute to a more capable Contingency Corps. These concepts are radical and unrelated; however, they do offer potential guidance in developing those capabilities required for an uncertain future. First, the paper examines unit coherence as the theoretical process of translating principles into doctrine and corresponding force structures. This involves significant subjective evaluation and judgment about the requirements for the constantly changing environment. Next, an all-joint contingency structure offers a totally new approach to worldwide force projection. Finally, better policy formulation analysis techniques are discussed, including recommendations for potential enhancements to our current weapons acquisition processes for the Contingency Corps and the Army.

UNIT COHERENCE

The fighting power of an Army
is in its organization, . . .
J.F.C. Fuller,
The Conduct of War

This section examines unit coherence as it applies to the Contingency Corps for rapid deployment, employment, and sustainment. The Army achieves coherence by continuously

adapting to a changing environment. The challenge is to identify that critical point when organizational and doctrinal changes must be made. Coherence is that satisfactory balance between doctrine and force structure which will facilitate tactical success. Concepts are briefly introduced that will contribute to building a more strategic and balanced force.

Coherence has several dimensions. Environment, technology, doctrine, organizational balance and equipment are but a few. Changes in the environment and technology are often out of the military's control. Doctrine and organization are different. These two elements of coherence allow the Army considerable freedom of action, but neither can be developed or implemented quickly. Both doctrine and organization require substantial investments of time and effort for development, comprehension, and training before they are inculcated throughout the Army.² In this discussion, balance refers to the critical relationship between combat service support, maneuver, and firepower. These three elements must operate as an organic whole in order for the organization to maintain coherence.

Contingency operations often require that doctrine and organizations be adjusted in response to changing conditions. Unfortunately, these adjustments are frequently made independently of each other. Such independent adaptation can detract significantly from coherence for several reasons. First, tradition and the regimental system resist permanent change. Changes occur only through small incremental steps.

Tailoring forces to a particular situation or environment is the most common technique to achieve relative coherence. For example, it is easier to tailor a force for a single deployment rather than to restructure an entire organization regardless of the possibilities for long-term organizational enhancements. Secondly, the Army may not recognize changes in conditions that require some adjustment of doctrine and organization. Finally, technological advances in weapons systems often dominate operations and planning, thereby dictating doctrine and employment, with little consideration for their impact on the organization or the various contingencies for which the organization may be held responsible.

RECENT EXAMPLES OF INCOHERENCE

Two recent combat deployments by the 82nd Airborne Division's Attack Helicopter Battalion (1/82nd) illustrate the need for congruent doctrine and organization.

The 1/82nd was covertly deployed to Panama to participate in Operation Just Cause. The attack battalion's AH-64A (Apache) advanced attack helicopter is a lethal weapons system which provides surgical fires under the cloak of darkness. Planners were astute to integrate such a formidable system to the invasion plan. Successful operations validated the AH-64 as a viable weapons system for future contingency operations. However, there is no published doctrine for the use of the attack battalion or the Apache in Low Intensity Conflict (LIC). Just Cause

commanders and planners were delighted with the opportunity to experiment with new doctrine and employment techniques. New uses for the Apache were discovered and validated for future LIC operations. This will lead the way for new doctrine. Several future capabilities include special operations, raids, close support, strategic reconnaissance, drop-zone/landing-zone preparation fires, strategic and tactical reconnaissance. Yet existing doctrine for Army Aviation and the attack helicopter is tied directly to the conventional battlefield. This doctrine fits the rest of the Army but not the Contingency Corps. Experimenting with new doctrinal approaches while under combat conditions is not the preferred way to wage war.³

Contingency forces were called on in August 1990 because they could rapidly reach the Persian Gulf region. The attack battalion was the first deployed from Ft. Bragg. Two Marine attack helicopter squadrons from Camp Pendleton, California, quickly deployed to form a joint command. The 82nd's attack battalion was placed under the operational control (OPCON) of the U.S. Central Command's (CENTCOM) U. S. Marine Corps component command (MARCENT) to complement their own organic AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters. MARCENT was assigned a deterrence mission along the Kuwait and Saudi Arabian border to deny any penetration by Iraqi forces.

At great cost, the attack battalion was tailored and augmented with logistical support to facilitate twenty-four hour continuous operations (CONOPS). It was also given an additional

air cavalry reconnaissance troop equipped with the OH-58D scout helicopter. This enhanced scout aircraft provided supplementary capabilities for long range target acquisition and laser designation. As a task force (TF), this 82nd attack battalion gave MARCENT their only significant night anti-armor capability until other ground forces arrived in theater. However, the price paid for this additional capability was that the TF absorbed over half of the logistical refueling and rearmament support capability from the parent aviation brigade. During the four months the TF was OPCON to MARCENT, the 82nd Aviation Brigade was thus limited in capability and supportability while supporting the 82nd Airborne Division in the XVIII Airborne Corps area of operation.

Attack battalions in the Contingency Corps have no organic fuel or rearmament capability. Yet, during the last combat deployment there is evidence of incoherence between doctrine and organization in this regard. Shortcomings in logistical organizational support structure were critically evident during the Persian Gulf combat deployment. Organization and doctrine in this case are not keeping pace with strategic requirements.

Even so, better doctrine and organizational structure for Aviation employment in support of LIC is a shortcoming that can be easily rectified. Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) is exploring these Contingency Corps problems and should expedite new doctrine and structure to the field.⁴ Coherence between organization and doctrine is a prerequisite to ensure future

mission accomplishment.

BALANCED FIREPOWER, MANEUVER, AND COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT

Contingency Corps maneuver brigades suffer incoherence due to an improperly balanced force design. The brigade is probably the most critical of all levels of command in the Contingency Corps; it requires a balance of forces that can quickly react to a crisis. Brigade commanders are the executors of the tactical plan for most contingency operations. They must maneuver faster and hit the enemy with responsive and overwhelming fires. Better coherence through achieving the proper balance of forces is required to give the maneuver brigade commander the combat power required in AirLand Battle Doctrine. Success on the battlefield depends on the commander's ability to fight in accordance with four basic tenets: initiative, agility, depth, and synchronization.⁵ During contingencies, operational planning must stress the instant recognition of opportunities to fight on favorable terms by capitalizing on enemy vulnerabilities, concentrating against enemy centers of gravity, and synchronizing application of combat power.

Current force structure lacks the organic firepower to meet all requirements. Present structure places 105MM howitzers in some divisions and 155MM in others. Even the Corps' heavy division lacks full-time organic fire support. What the brigade does have is three maneuver battalions that are highly mobile with excellent direct fire capabilities, but brigade command

exercises limited control over combat support assets and are incapable of independent sustainment. Usually the brigade manages these maneuver battalions while being augmented by artillery, air defense, engineers, attack helicopters, and other assets. But these augmenting forces respond to the priorities of their own higher headquarters as well as to the brigade's needs.

Division ready brigades (DRB) assigned to either special or heavy divisions in the Contingency Corps should have balanced maneuver, firepower, and combat support forces capable of independent operations. Currently the brigade commander cannot count on being or remaining augmented, nor is he in control of sustainment training for those units while not deployed. However, one of the division's three artillery battalions is normally in direct support of each brigade. Nonetheless, competing priorities often curtail the maneuver brigade commander's prerogative. As brigades are committed to deep attack operations, division artillery (DIVARTY) must concurrently plan on supporting the associated suppression of enemy air defenses (SEAD) with those same artillery battalions. A resolution of this problem would be to make the maneuver brigade totally independent organizationally and augment the division with corps self-sustaining artillery brigades. A balanced self-contained brigade should serve as the basic building block of tactical forces for the Contingency Corps. Specific changes to the present design should include at a minimum organic artillery and combat service support assets. Strategically, this would

facilitate the corps commander's contingency planning problems for task organization. Heavy-light divisional task organizing would then be feasible without the previous layers of traditional infrastructure.⁶ Airborne, air-assault, mechanized, armor, or light infantry brigades could be quickly cross-attached to any division or joint task force (JTF). The independent brigade concept is currently being analyzed by TRADOC combat arms schools as a result of the Operation Desert Storm experiences.⁷

LOGISTICS - A SPECIAL ANALYSIS

I don't know much about this thing called logistics. All I know is that I want some
Admiral Ernest J. King, Leadership

As we have seen, logistics is an Achilles' heel for commanders at all levels in the Contingency Corps. At the tactical level, the brigade is the consumer. Combat service support commanders should be under the direct control of the brigade so that the supported unit's status, needs, usage factors, and methods of operation are fully understood.⁸ Currently, forward support battalions (FSB) are tailored to the needs of the maneuver brigade and provide direct support only in a field environment. This structural arrangement hinders the development of the cohesive relationship between the service support organization and the brigade necessary for dynamic, independent operations.

Brigades need more than a combat service support unit to

follow them on a deployment. They need one which is responsible for establishing a support system that is unique to each brigade and understands the minds of all the commanders in those brigades. A support unit should be under the direct authority of the brigade commander, who can then influence its internal policy, priorities, and sustainment training. In essence, to meet the operational requirements of self-sufficiency and independent operations the brigade must possess its own combat service support.⁹

FM 54-30, Corps Support Groups (CSG) specifies the corps' area of influence as extending from the corps rear boundary to the enemy's second echelon during deep attack operations.¹⁰ In this situation the corps may occupy an area 100 by 210 kilometers. CSG support operations synchronize and cross-level resources to support the commander's intent. This new logistics doctrine advocates pushing bulk fuel, ammunition, and critical supplies directly to the attacking brigades. The CSG now pushes well into what was formerly the main division area. Simply stated, the divisional support command level has been by-passed in order to achieve more responsive combat support. Establishing the FSB permanently under the maneuver brigade is the next logical step.

Another problematic design, detracting from coherence, is the absence of a dedicated, or even an organic, support unit for combat aviation brigades throughout the Contingency Corps. Under the current structure, the combat aviation brigade depends on the

aircraft maintenance company, controlled by the division support command, for direct support maintenance of its aircraft. During Operation Desert Storm, all XVIIIth Airborne Corps combat aviation brigades eventually organized impromptu forward support battalions from existing force structure.¹¹ All the above arguments regarding the maneuver brigades apply equally to the combat aviation brigade. Further, the aviation brigade is unique in that it need not share its aviation peculiar service support with other units. Its unique needs and the operational requirement to conduct independent deep strikes in support of the division, corps, or JTF argue for providing the combat aviation brigade with its own organic combat support.¹²

THE CASE FOR A TOTALLY JOINT CONTINGENCY FORCE

In "A Strategic Force for the 1990's and Beyond," the former Chief of Staff articulates the correct theme for the Army's input to military strategy: "No amount of commitment and political will to defend vital interests around the world can substitute for timely deployment of sustainable land forces capable of countering a miscalculation or deliberate aggression by an opponent."¹³ We have utilized the Contingency Corps in the Southern Command and Central Command areas of responsibility (AOR) within the past two years. Force projection offers our President an effective instrument of national power. The recent successes by these forces justifies their use; the Army takes pride in that. Our enemies are deterred by this American

strategic capability to rapidly react and sustain a fight. Nonetheless, maintaining this rapid response force as a conventional deterrent and a viable military option is becoming problematical.¹⁴

This rapid deployment capability can be applied in special, contingency, and reinforcing operations at any point along the operational continuum. Contemporary employment of the Contingency Corps has featured two different operational levels of conflict. These deployments supported joint operations and interoperability in the jungles of Central America and the deserts of Southwest Asia.

As fiscal constraints increase, the anticipated capabilities of the current force structure correspondingly diminish. It is painfully obvious that Army leaders will have to depend more on joint forces and associated operations to achieve the CINC's military objectives. During Operation Desert Shield the 82nd Airborne Division initially deployed a reinforced attack helicopter battalion task force (TF) to the AOR. Upon arrival, the TF was placed under the operational control of the Marine Corps which had responsibility for the Saudi Arabia and Kuwait border. This relationship was sustained for a period of four months until sufficient Marine tank-killing assets with night capabilities became operational in the theater.

This foregoing situation provides only one example of how mission specialization becomes a very expensive process for each service to maintain. Each branch of the military cannot afford

to resource rapid deployment forces in the future. It is also apparent that one corps cannot expect to go it alone in the future.¹⁵ A joint CONUS-based contingency force appears to be a relevant alternative to provide immediate, flexibly tailored, and consistent command relationships. Can we afford not to consider such a measure in the interest of saving money while providing the war fighting CINCs with the best possible forces?

It is time now for the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to consider the best means for optimizing the firepower, mobility, and logistical support of a joint contingency force structure.¹⁶ It is apparent that all the services have some of the following assets:

1. Special operations forces (SOF)
2. Aviation (attack, air assault, close air, medical evacuation, combat service support, aerial observation, et al.)
3. Engineers
4. Base security forces
5. Ground and water transportation (Navy, Marine, and Army)
6. Medical, religious, and jurisprudence
7. Fire support (Army, Marine, and Navy)
8. Logistic centers
9. Supply distribution networks
10. Air defense

The list is far from complete. Hopefully, we can arrive at beneficial solutions that provide the best possible force structure for any eventuality.

Service parochialism, force planning paradigms, and other self-interests must give way to cost effective benefits that provide lethal force packages. If we do not consider a joint approach to this CONUS based contingency force, Congress may do it for us. The conflicts over where to cut the defense budget may be overshadowed by the battle over where to spend what money is saved. If the 1991 and 1992 defense appropriations are any indication, we can expect Congressional guidance to select unit composition based on the pork barrel technique.¹⁷ As late as 8 January 1992, the House and Senate majority leaders have called for amending the 1990 budget law that caps and protects defense spending through 1993.¹⁸ Democratic and Republican lawmakers seem intent on making arbitrary defense cuts in favor of funding essential domestic programs. Major General Jerome Granrud, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, Force Development, warns that "hasty budget reductions drastically reduce force development flexibility to adequately design force structures and modern weapons systems for an uncertain future."¹⁹

Leaders at all levels should take the initiative and explore this new methodology for forming the contingency force. This potential joint structure maximizes the best capabilities of all services. It offers strategic flexibility to the National Command Authorities (NCA) and CINCs through a force that is deployable, lethal, and self-sustaining. Further, it provides a cost-effective integrated organization involved across the entire operational continuum.

POLICY FORMULATION ANALYSIS AND WEAPONS ACQUISITION

Old threats are evaporating and new ones are sure to arrive on the horizon. They will require the strategic military element of power. The current national economy and world order portend tough times for the Army. Analysts predict that more severe fiscal crunches are ahead by the mid-to-late 1990s.²⁰ To counter this problem, the Army should consider a long-term acquisition strategy based on the best policy formulation analysis techniques. The paradigm that requires the entire Army to be modernized with identical weapons and force structures may not be possible in the out-years. This point becomes clear when we analyze the current environment and our national economic predicament.

The public always wants more services than it is willing to support through taxes. Recent national and local election returns favor elected officials who would cut spending and taxes, regardless of the impact on services. Public loss of confidence in government fuels this trend to force legislatures to do a better job in allocating resources. The idea that fewer dollars will require more efficient processes and responsibility in government is an inviting concept. However, the ailing 1991 economy perpetuates fear and uncertainty, which render lawmakers even more ineffective. Correctly perceiving public unhappiness with government, higher-level policy makers have become less willing to argue for the resources needed to provide effective national services, programs, and defense.²¹

In Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices, Peter Drucker notes that performance and results are exceptions in government agencies and other public-service institutions. Drucker's analysis reveals that government agencies tend to be misdirected because they are supported by budget allocations rather than being paid for results -- and that such departmental agencies tend to fragment their resources by trying to please everyone.²² Some recent Army procurement strategies and programs reinforce low Congressional and public confidence in our ability to invest wisely. These questionable efforts include but are not limited to, the Aquilla remotely piloted vehicle (RPV), the Sergeant York Air Defense (DIVAD) weapons system, and the Maneuver Control System (MCS) of the Army Tactical Command and Control System (ATCCS) suite of programs. It is futile to slam Congress for lack of adequate support or to bash the Army for making large investments in high-risk technologies. Nor is it appropriate here to debate the capabilities and inadequacies of these systems. Rather, it seems evident that poor policy formulation analysis continues to plague modernization in the Army. Thorough analysis, with all the proper evaluation criteria in place early on, makes for more prudent decision making.

Army decision-makers tend to give sustained life to programs that fail to live up to predicted policy outcomes. Unfortunately, the Army has difficulty envisioning what total end state it desires. Policy formulation analysis done early and in sufficient detail may curtail a flawed program. Currently, credible program

evaluations must be made all along the way during the procurement process. When it appears that overall program or policy objectives are not going to be met a feedback process must be in place to document the key dimensions of that program's performance to date.

How does this apply to our contingency force? It is time to consider the Contingency Corps as a unique force structure - one that should be equipped on its own merit to insure the best possible capabilities for mission accomplishment. Compromising on general procurement policies for the total force may lead to more fiscal shortfalls and program cuts. During the policy formulation process, certain general evaluation criteria should be applied. Initial questions should be answered thoroughly prior to spending the first dollar. These questions for contingency force weapons systems acquisition include:

1. How vital is its mission? Could existing systems in the joint arena, including upgraded current weapons, perform the mission adequately? Is it viable for the entire Army force?
2. How significant would the new weapon's increased capability be compared with that of current weapons and in light of projected changes in the threat?
3. Can the projected system meet cost and performance goals? Is it affordable, given budget constraints?
4. Would more time in development and less simultaneous production help reduce problems in production?
5. Can the system be fielded in time to meet replacement

criteria for aging ones?

6. How will decisions on this weapon and possible alternatives affect all aspects of the defense industry? Research analysts warn that the evaluation criteria must be constantly reviewed and updated. The logic that fit last year is not necessarily applicable to the present or the future.²³

Program formulation analysis demands our best effort because buying this next generation of weapons could prevent the Department of Defense from adequately filling out even a smaller military force. Without large budget increases in the late 1990's, the Pentagon simply will not be able to buy enough weapons to outfit its forces adequately.²⁴ Those weapons and war-fighting systems that remain in the inventory will age, and operations/support costs will probably escalate.

The Army has recently applied the policy formulation analysis technique in its effort to reduce the force structure. The Total Army Analysis (TAA) process, Functional Area Assessment (FAA), and the Mission Area Assessment (MAA) are programs that seek to structure the Army with the best possible organization for combat. These are signs that the overall decision making process is convalescing. Unfortunately, the TAA process does not consider the FAA and MAA independently.²⁵ It is time now to pull it all together and decide what we can afford and when to procure it. There is no more room for making big program changes in midstream that could have been avoided through adequate policy formulation analysis.

CONCLUSION

The French Revolution introduced the system of divisions, which broke up the excessive compactness of the old formation and brought upon the field fractions capable of independent movement on any kind of ground. These divisions...maneuvered and fought separately.

Jomini, Summary of the Art of War

Organization is the physical expression of doctrine. Since structure ideally evolves from doctrine, the two share an integral relationship. If contingency forces are not optimally organized to implement AirLand Battle Operations, incoherence results and combat effectiveness is lost. The concept of totally self-sufficient, balanced brigades promotes independent operations and increases the probability of tactical success. Units of the XVIIIth Airborne Corps must be ready to deploy in less than 18 hours and DRBs have only 12 hours. Principally, this research recommends the brigade as the level where forces are best permanently combined into self-sufficient organizations. This proposition applies to the Army's entire force structure.

A new approach to a CONUS based contingency force is worthy of appraisal. Surely, it smacks of apostasy in some corners of the Army. However, the paradigm must be broken in order to get the best return on investment. Joint doctrine has evolved and has proven itself in Operations Just Cause, Desert Shield, and Desert Storm. The next step is a total joint force structure.

Recent domestic and international events have thrust upon

the Army, JCS, and the Presidency tough fiscal decisions. Risks are anticipated in the force structure, and new systems acquisitions are sure to decline. The jeopardy in these reductions can be minimized if changes are directed in accord with the correct vision. Acquisition strategies must be considered for the contingency force, apart from the entire Army. Soldiers with the highest probability of implementing the military element of power deserve to have the best technology available.

Policy formulation analysis is an obvious but neglected process. Failure to project what end state we really desire and can afford often plagues the leadership as they take shortcuts or select incorrect program/policy evaluation criteria. We need thorough planning and feedback and broad consensus within the Army on what programs we must have. We must become demonstrably efficient in this process and win back the confidence of the Congress and the American people. Only then can we demand more of them.

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